

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
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Contact: 98 - 19
Jay Ziegler
Christine Wilkas
(202) 395-3230
www.ustr.gov

**STATEMENT BY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
CHARLENE BARSHEFSKY IN RESPONSE TO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF AFRICA TRADE LEGISLATION**

United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky today expressed her appreciation to the House Ways and Means Committee for a strong bi-partisan voice vote in support of Africa trade legislation, H.R. 1432. Ambassador Barshefsky participated in the House Ways and Means mark-up session and issued the following comment upon the Committee's action today:

"This is an important day in setting a new direction for trade and economic cooperation with Africa," said Ambassador Barshefsky. "The strong bi-partisan vote in favor of Africa trade legislation sends a clear signal that the Congress shares the President's desire to help move the region toward greater economic and political stability. This legislation and the President's economic initiative on Africa provide a foundation to expand trade, accelerate economic reforms, and increase growth in the region. The Administration strongly supports H.R. 1432 and we are committed to work closely with the Congress to enact this legislation."